County benches plan to expand courthouse

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A highly visible and sometimes controversial 'Oakland County project has been scrapped, at least temporarily.

The proposed \$80 million addition to the county courthouse has quietly been dropped from the list of high priority items compiled by the Oakland County Board of Commissions. "We're looking at other alternatives." confirmed board chairman, Hoy Rewold, R-Oakland Township. The commissioners' list of high priority items was made public thursday at the regular board meeting when Rewold and others presented a list of goals and objectives for 1991-92.

Implementing the county's solid

1991-92 Implementing the county's solid waste program is very high on the list, Rewold said, along with other good-government items like better service to taxpayers and streamling county government. But the proposed courthouse addi-tion rated barely a mention during one of the committee reports. "I think it died a natural death," said Chief Judge Steven N. Andrews

"I don't know where we go from here ... but we're running out of space. Providing it is a legislative matter for commissioners to de-

FOR COMMISSIONERS to list goals and objectives is a new idea in itself, said Rewold, "We're not in roufflet with the county executive. We offer these goals as something to shoot for and something to measure our performance."

Downgrading the courthouse project is the result of two things, according to commissioner Marilynn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills. "The economy and the downturn are part of it. But that downturn has also prompted us to rethink the way we do things."

An addition to the courthouse—to be built in the area now reserved for parking across from the existing structure—has been discussed with varying digrees of intensity for at least five years as the errout court of two judges this year and will add two judges the year and will add two more in 1993. Besides courtenous the properties of t

"People perceive the courthouse addition as nonessential. They don't want something that is seen as only benefiting judges.'

- Commissioner Marilynn Gosling R-Bloomfield Hills

for 25 staff members.
In 1989, the addition was projected to cost \$1.02 million But a courthouse task force scaled the plan down and came back with an \$80-million proposal.

Among those who questioned the need for an \$80 million addition was tax foe Richard Headlee. He threat-ened to sue the county if officials tried to sell bonds to finance the ad-dition without first getting voter ap-

HEADLEE SAID selling bonds for the courthouse addition, the solid waste program and the new comput-er center was illegal without a vote of the people.

They are currently preparing to sell bonds for the waste program, and the \$10 million computer center went shead as scheduled. The country's computer staff is expected to move into the new complex. Jocated on the west side of Telegraph Road near the Road Curninsson office. In September. But the courthouse, at least the \$40 million version, is dead, said Gosling, a member of the courthouse task force. The only perfectly the second of the courthouse task force.

"People perceive the courthouse addition as nonessential," she said

"They don't want something that is seen as only benefiting judges."

The county still needs space, six eaknowledged. "But rather flan adding into the courthouse. I think well have to shuffle people around."

People and offices were shuffled, for example, to make room for the county's 15th and 16th circuit court judges. Deborah Tyner and Rudy Nichols, elected last fall.

In one incident, the prosecutor's offices were moved from the main courtbouse to offices less than a mile away at 230 Elizabeth Lake Road

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County prosecutor seeks By Pat Murphy staff writer Prosecutor Richard Thompson Jans to ask for a fund Oakland County critizens grand Jury to replace to ence the one that express this month. The grand Jury, and proceedings surrounding it. are confidential, "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges will listen to the prosecutor fundation of the said." The said "I will be compared to the one that express this month. The grand Jury, and proceedings surrounding it. are confidential, "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the said "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges." The said "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the said "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges." The said "Of those, 29 we charged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the said "Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the said "Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the said "Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the proceedings surrounding it. are confidential," Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges. The proceedings surrounding it. are confidential, "Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges." The grand Jury to the proceedings surrounding it. are confidential," of the proceedings surrounding it. are confidential, "Of those, 29 we harged and one per judges." The proceedings surrounding it. are confidential," of the proceedings are considered. The proceedings are considered in the proceedings are consid

Prosecutor Richard Thompson plans to ask for a turd Oakland County citizens grand jury to replace the one that expires this month. "The grand jury has proven to be very effective," said Thompson, "And I certainly want to keep at going."

going."

The prosecutor made his remarks.

The prosecutor made his remarks. Friday in response to questions about the effectiveness of the grand jury and its future.

Thompson said he will make his request to the Oakland Circuit Court judges this month, at the same time he presents confidential material about why it should be continued. When contacted Friday aftermon, Chief Judge Steven N Andrews declined to discuss the grand jury or to speculate about how Thompson's request would be received.

CNTIL SEPTEMBER 1989 a cuizzone grand jury was a rarity in Oak-land County
But since Thompson's petition was granted. Oakland has had two, spe-cifically emponelled to probe into-drug trafficking and unsolved mur-ders.

At one point last spring, Oakland actually had two grand juries sitting simultaneously. The second grand jury finishes a full year - the max-mum duration allowed under law this month, perimpting Thompson to

this month, prompting Thompson to seek a third Sixty people have been indicted by the grand jury during that time. Thompson said, including nine for

murder and one for perjury.

"Of those, 29 were convicted as charged and one person has been acquitted," he said. "The others are at some stage of prosecution."

One case was dismissed, Thompson said. That involved a Brandon Township man who was indeted last May and spent hearly two weeks in the Dakhand County juil before convincing authorities his agrest was a case of mistaken identity.

The prosecutor said he views that case as evidence the grand jury is committed to protecting the innocent as well as indetenting the guilty. In that case the defendant passed a polygraph test and we left we called the case the carriers. THOMPSON SAID he is particularly pleased with the indictments last summer of nine members of these called. Kalasho. Organization

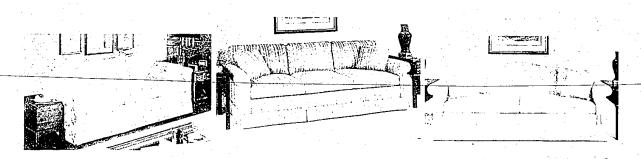


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